FANTASTIC FANZINE

No. 9
$1.00

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This Fanzine Has Just

Cut, Chopped, and Burned 5 Men Beyond Recognition...

YE GOOD OL' EDITOR'S PAGE

...An Act Of Revenge

There are a lot of people in fandom these days who have become disillusioned with the state and direction of the comic book industry. There is little creativity, a lack of new ideas, a fierce competition for the reader's buck. Well, all that may or may not be true, as it is certainly a matter of opinion. Personally, I can name at least one example from each company that I *really* love to read. I can name at least one 'dog' each company is producing, also. Sorry, no names. This isn't a review column. As I said, it's a matter of opinion, and each comic fan has his or her own unique opinion.

There is, however, more to being a fan than just reading and collecting comics. Being a member of 'fandom' means being part of a group of people with a singular common denominator: they're all into comics. Most, if not all, comic professionals came from the ranks of fandom and are still part of it. It's a wonderful 'non-organization' to belong to. This fact really hit home the weekend of July 5-7 at the Chicago Comic Convention.

What a blast! We're talking twelve *thousand* plus attendees. Three days of panels, seminars, discussions, and *parties!!!* all centered around the world of comic books. It was surrealistic. A was a grand, fun hullabaloo over, as a friend once described it to me, a "trivial pursuit". Oh, but it was fun! We were all totally immersed in it and enjoyed it thoroughly. Some were more serious-minded about it than others, of course. To some, of necessity, it was a business trip. I imagine if I spent most of my time there behind a dealer's table it may have seemed a bit more mundane, yet the convention did continue long past its scheduled times albeit in various places in the Rosada and the City of Chicago. Boy, that was a long sentence. Probably one of the longest I have written in a while. Oh. Excuse me, sorry. It's just that, as I write this, I stop and go back over what I just wrote. This is because I am the Editor. As the Editor, I am required to ensure that the writer in me, who likes to play around with words so much, keeps to the goal of the article in question, and not allow any mischevious (not to be confused with Ms. Chevious) ramblings about things other than the realm of the subject. ***Bonus! Sorry, that just come out. Sometimes a line just comes out and you've got to follow it. In this case, however, it is not totally meaningless. As my creative side displayed a rather uncharacteristic flare-up (in the final copy, no less!), the Editor in me managed to plug two of our up-coming projects. So there!

.....Oh, alright! We've come to an agreement. He won't allow me to tell any more about my rather characteristic plug...and he won't allow me to continue my romp. And just when I was startin' to have fun, too...

The Chicago Con was a place to mix business with pleasure. Young kids intermingled with 'old pros'. A million questions were asked, character sketches flew, resumes and portfolios were displayed (some rather good ones, too), 'plugs' abounded, and several casks of aged ale breathed their last, and a wonderful time was had by all.

This was what fandom is all about! Beyond any artistic differences, moral judgements and educational values, beyond and above all that is *entertainment!* What? Is entertainment above educational values and moral judgements!?

Yes! Without the entertainment value you won't get your point across. Our *aim* is entertainment! And we were!

Hopefully, we can do the same for you with this issue. Susan Ten Camp has brought her talents to us with her PEI PEEVE; Guy Davis makes an appearance on our cover this issue along with his STAR CORPS saga inside; and a three-pager from a very talented young man, Vince Locke offers us HERP Ralph and I are already thinking of scripts to send his way. Our SMALL PRESS REPORT returns with yet more Chicago Con news; THE CIRCUIT features a Michael Lester interview; a complete Steranko checklist; and our main course this issue, the Terry Austin interview by Kirk Groeneveld.

I hope you enjoy *something* in here, so be sure to let us know if you do... or not! We wanna know! Only YOU can prevent the fanzine blues!

P.S. I did sneak one more plug in there somewhere. Nyah nyah. And if you can figure out what this month's YE GOOD OL' EDITOR'S PAGE title means (or, at least, where it comes from) you can win a free six-issue sub! First three correct answers at this number...

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FANTASTIC FANZINE

INTERVIEWS

TERRY AUSTIN

by

K. Groeneveld

KG: You've worked with some of the major names and talents in the business. The one that comes to mind right now is John Byrne for his work on the X-MEN. You've also worked with Bill Mantlo and several other people more recently. Do you have a favorite person to work with, or a favorite team?

Austin: No, not one...basically, what I tell folks when they ask me a question like that is this: Anyone that I have worked with more than once, it's because I have enjoyed doing their stuff and I like working with them, and they've liked what I've done. It's good for me to work with a variety of people, 'cause I pick up different things (different tips) about drawing from working (with) different artstyles. Different ways of composing a picture, different ways of constructing figures. Part of inking for me is picking up stuff. It's a learning process. I think that I can safely say I can draw better now than I could before I started inking. In fact, John Byrne claims that I draw eyes just like he draws eyes, so he takes credit for how I draw eyes, but I don't know if he's right or not, so...

KG: Is that your specialty, your forte? John Byrne eyes?

Austin: I don't know. I thought "Nette Davis Eyes" was the song, I don't know. Maybe I should come out with a song "John Byrne Eyes". (hums a few bars)

KG: What are the latest projects that you have been working on? I happen to have gotten a Christmas card that you did, featuring "Ziggy Pig" and I was wondering if that was a new comic character of yours?

Austin: I'd like to do a "Ziggy Pig/Silly Seal" story line for All Winners MARVEL FANFARE. But, I'd have to write one first, because there's no one at the office who knows who the characters are. They're Marvel characters from the 40's and early 50's... funny animal characters.

KG: Where did you find them?

Austin: I had bought some of the books at these cons...I'd picked up some of the back issues at these book. They're real silly characters and they're fun to draw!

Actually, concerning real projects, right now my schedule isn't really that heavy, 'cause I'm trying to put aside some time to do some drawing and try some different things. I've just sold Marvel a plot for a POWER PACK story that I'm supposed to script as well. So, basically, the only regular series I'm working on right now is a bi-monthly CLOAK AND DAGGER book with Bill Mantlo and Rick Leonards...the samefolks who did the mini-series. It'll be a continuing book this time, instead of a mini-series because the characters are very popular and the mini-series went over well.

And then, an EPIC MAGAZINE, which is also bi-monthly, there's "The Last Galactus" series, with John Byrne. But, that is a limited series that'll be ending pretty soon, I believe.

KG: Oh, I don't know...I heard that it will go on forever...(laughs)

Austin: Well, let's hope not...(laughs)... in addition to the regular work, there are several one-shot projects. John (Byrne) and I are supposed to do a Dark Phoenix/Silver Surfer one-shot. I'm supposed to ink this year's NEW MUTANTS SPECIAL, as well, which is 64 pages, penciled by Art Adams. Also, a double-sized issue of the FANTASTIC FOUR... bringing back a very popular character who hasn't been seen lately.

What else? A CLOAK AND DAGGER graphic novel, done by the same team that does the regular book...possibly a DR. STRANGE graphic novel with Roger Stern and Brent Anderson...graphic novel with Roger Zelazny and Jim Starlin...probably several others that have slipped my mind. That's a good start, anyway! (chuckles)

KG: Sounds like you're driven (by whoever doles out the work there at Marvel) some of the major characters, some of the most attractive hot properties to work on. In fact, there was just a young lady here with an X-MEN that originally sold for $10 that is now going for over $10. How does that make you feel? I realize that duplications of your work in a comic book form are going for those high prices?

Austin: (laughs and stutters for words) You know, it's flattering by the thing (sic)! You know, if that's what the market will bear...the only time that it bothered me was when Marvel hadn't sent me copies of some of the X-MEN books that I had done... and I had to go out and buy them and I had to pay those inflated prices...(laughs) At that point, it was sort of like, "Well, gee, this is kind silly. I poured my heart into this and now I'm paying for it?"

KG: So you're not a collector like the rest of us?

Austin: Well, I am, actually...I just had let those issues slip past me, really. Either that or I hadn't given my mother a copy of those. She likes to keep a copy of everything that I work on.

Actually, most of the jobs that I got these days come from the pencillers calling me on the phone and saying, "I'm thinking about doing this project and I'd like you to work with me on it," or, "I've been offered such-and-such project and if you'd like to work with me on it, I'm going to take it. Otherwise, I'm going to do something else."

KG: That's rather flattering!

Austin: That's way flattering! I can't think of anything that makes me feel better than that!

KG: Did you have any sense of what you wanted to go into when you were going to art school? How did you get into this business?

Austin: Yes, I did! (laughs) I thought I was going to go to New York and paint (chuckles), as naturally, I ink comic books for a living! (laughs) Actually, I thought it would be nice to be a painter, and do some inking in my spare time. I did take out some painting samples when I went to New York the first time...unfortunately, I wasn't very good at drawing at that point. Technically, the paintings were 'OK', at least, that's what they told me. They said they would send me some sample drawings by Dick Giordano and some other artist, and I would turn them into paintings. Months later, when they sent me the samples, there were only inking samples. They had forgotten about the painting...and I haven't painted since. (laughs) So, this was the career of a painter nipped in the bud, I guess. (smiles)

I have a standing offer from Jim Shooter to do a painting for a book anytime I want to, but my paints are all dried up and I just don't have the years now, so, I feel like I would have to take a year off to learn how to paint again. So I don't think you'll be seeing any painting in the near future.

KG: Awwwww.... When you think back over the hundreds of comics that you've inked and the drawings or character sketches... are there any particular issues that really stand out in your memory as being special or important? Something that you're really proud of? I know that there's a cover or two in the HANDBOOK that you drew yourself or that some issues you had more than the standard inker's role.

Austin: Yeah, usually if it's something that's somebody else's to me, it's because everybody did their best...it was a good story, great pencils, perhaps I did an OK job as well. There's this issue of the X-MEN where we open in the circus (X-MEN #111) and the X-Men are freed! And we don't know how they got there! That's the kind of story that I like reading. Kind of deep people into the middle and knock there knees out from under 'em and they have to follow the story to figure out how we came to such an outrageous pass...

The BATMAN series that Marshall Rogers, Steve Englehart and I did, as far as I am concerned, is the definitive Batman. I don't think anyone's ever written BATMAN better than those stories. Those are the one's that kind of stand out in my memory.

KG: For example, is there any one particular issue in the Marvel line? I'm saying that because I'm more familiar with the Marvel lineup...

Austin: (interrupting in a W.C. Field's voice) Well, let's get another interviewer in here... (beckons to the line of fans behind us) ...No, not just offhand. I've done a lot more work at Marvel than I have at anywhere else. (pauses to think) Offhand, no, I'd say there isn't...What a great answer. (laughs) Stop tape!

I love being at these things (comic book conventions), because the kids inevitably come up to me and ask which issue number such-and-such occurred...and, you know, I might remember the story, but the exact number? (laughs) I come off looking real dumb to some of these kids. I'm sure kids go home and say, (switches to a Sonny Tyle voice) "Yeah, we saw him and he was...he didn't know anything!"

KG: You really enjoy the kids at conventions, don't you? I've seen you stop interviews to talk to a little kid. Is there a reason you're drawn to the kids?

Austin: Probably because I was always pretty shy, and I'm sure that if I had come to any of these things...well, I *did* come to some of these things with guards whose work I liked....It was all I could do to summon up enough courage to ask them a question. So, generally, I like to linger at the person on the other side of the table as me, umpteen years ago. If the kid just stands there, I'll try to ask them a couple questions, kind of draw them out, to show that, you know, you can talk to me, I'm just another guy off the street. The fact that I draw comics doesn't make me anything special. I'm not working for world peace or anything, I'm not putting the bolts on an airplane anywhere, some job that's dependend on. I'm just a guy that draws for a living.

KG: Do your friends or family look down on you (Terry laughs) or criticize you for being involved with a medium that's kind of juvenile or, at least, regarded as juvenile?

Austin: (pauses) No, no, I don't get that feeling from anyone. I know my mom was kind of worried that I might not be able to make a living doing artwork. She came from working on a farm or something like that, where you actually got up in the morning, went out somewhere and *laboured*. "And by the sweat of your brow..." My brow sweats in the summer when I'm sitting in the studio if I don't have my air conditioner on. But, it's hard for some people to conceive that you could sit in a room by yourself, day in and day out, and they would give you money for it!

Kirk Groenveld: Your work is sought after by collectors and dealers alike and has a high resale value. I just wondered what it feels like to be 'on top of the heap'.

Terry Austin: (laughs) I'm going to have to ask for a rewind to get back to New York! I sound pretty important. Actually, I feel great. I've always liked comics. I spent so much money on comics, I always tell my wife that now comics are spending money on me, so it's only fair, you know.

KG: Do you consider yourself an artist or an inker, or do you see any distinction between the two roles?

Austin: Well, I think inkers are artists. There's a lot more involved in inking than just tracing over the lines, which was the primary function of the inker when the jobs first were broken down. It was just a matter of tracing over the lines to aid in reproduction of the artwork. Nowadays, there are more specialized forms of breakdowns. Sometimes a penciller will only do rough layouts, then you're called in to finish the artwork, and you end up contributing a lot more. Some people are looser pencillers, some are tighter. You basically have to know how to draw, in order to ink...otherwise I don't think you can be a very good inker.

KG: Is it a lonely profession to be an artist?

Austin: Sometimes it is. I work with the TV on all the time so that there's a human voice somewhere in the room. It kind of takes my mind off the fact that I'm sitting there for fourteen-fifteen hours without seeing anyone.

I have worked in an art studio with other people, but I find that I like just getting out of bed in the morning, and grabbing something to eat, and having the studio right there where I don't have to travel. So, I've done both, and they're both fine ways to work. There's a lot of socializing involved when you're in an art studio with other artists and there's people dropping by and stuff, which is good, too.

For right now, I prefer having all my books, my reference, supplies, record player, TV, (laughs) cartoons on video tape, right there in one location where I can lay my hands on it.

KG: The X-Men went to Canada in about issues 120-121, for those of us who live and die by those issue numbers...

Austin: Well, that's basically because John was living there at the time. He was a Canadian citizen at the time.

KG: The fans seem to respond very well when a story takes place outside of New York, somewhere that they can identify or where they live. I understand that you have some family in the Greater Detroit area. Can we expect to see in any of Terry Austin's more realistic works something going on in Detroit or this area?

Austin: Not in the near future. There are no plans. But, I understand that there is a major book at one of the major companies set in this city right now. But, all I have heard since I got back here is complaints that it's inaccurate as to places and street names. They had the city set on Lake Michinon in one issue, I believe! The only thing we're bout doing something outside the New York metropolitan area is that you'd better darn well know the area 'cause people will let you know if you goof it up! (laughs)

KG: I was going to ask you if you felt that you changed the world through your comic books, or if you saw any impact from your work on life in general or, obviously, your fans?

Austin: I don't expect I have that much of an impact. I mean, comic books are basically just for entertainment. Comic books got started because they were cheap (inexpensive) entertainment that you could read and then throw away and you didn't have a lot of money invested in them. You got your kicks for ten minutes and then threw it away. They started out just being newspaper strip reprints.

So, I don't expect a lot of impact on the issues of the day just by doing comics. The only thing that I think about once in a while is that comics are pretty good for teaching good moral values. I mean, they're basically heroes, and heroes are generally the people you identify with when you read the comics. And, I know, (when I was) growing up, I read SUPERMAN and he stood for truth and Justice and he wouldn't lie, and, as a kid, I remember thinking, "Gosh, maybe that's a good way to live." You know, "Don't lie to people and treat them fairly."

I think that, if comics have any sort of educational value, which I'm sure they do, just in terms of teaching people to read and getting them interested in reading, it's possibly a sort of side benefit that, in fact, your following the adventures of some awfully nice folks! (big smile)

KG: There were some recent critisisms on the "700 Club" where they were rather harsh on some comics. And back in the '50's there was a major investigation, de attack, launched on the comic industry. If you could change comics in light of those critisisms (just by waving your hand you have the power now), what would you do to change it?

Austin: Let's see...I'd probably be the highest paid employee...(laughs) Gosh, I don't know. I don't know that comics need a lot of change. As I understand it, the comics that have been singled out lately for critisism are basically comic books for adults, even though they are not labeled, PEX 46, on the cover. Possibly, if I had to change something, maybe a labeling system would be appropriate so that that things that shouldn't fall into kid's hands don't fall into kid's hands quite as readily.

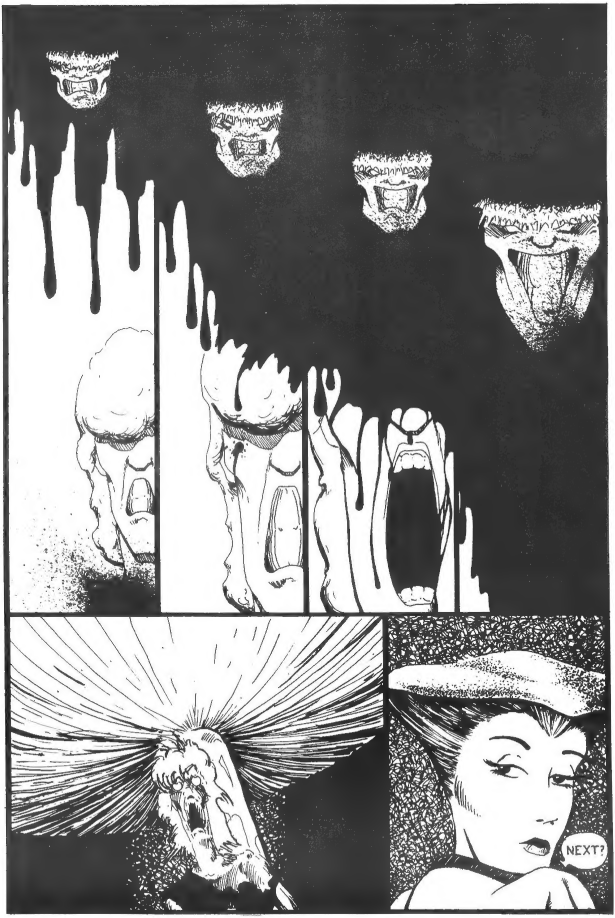
KG: In closing, let me ask you: What's the one question that you've always wished an interviewer would ask Terry Austin, but never seem to get around to? This is your soapbox, Terry.

Austin: Gosh, (pauses, then eagerly) I've never had an interviewer ask me if my car needed washing in the parking lot after the interview...

* * * \

HUH?
COME, MY FRIEND, DON'T BE SO SUSPICIOUS...
...TAKE A PUFF FROM THE HOOKAH.
LOOSEN UP.
SLIP INTO A DREAM...
...AND KISS YOUR SANITY GOOD-BYE
HUH?
©85 VINCE LOCKE

I THINK...
...I'M GOING...
...TO DIE.
I'M ALIVE! BUT I CAN'T MOVE!
I'M PARALYZED FROM THE NECK DOWN!!
YOU AIN'T PARALYZED, STUPID.
YOU'RE BOUND TO THE WAILING BOARD...
WHERE HEROES DIE CRUEL DEATHS, AND WUSSIES LIKE YOU DIE EVEN CRUELER DEATHS!
I'M GONNA SET YOUR TOE-NAILS ON FIRE, CUT OFF YOUR EYELIDS AND FEED THEM TO THE BIRDS, STICK BLOOD THIRSTY LEACHES IN YOUR NOSE...
...AND BITE YOUR LIPS OFF.
BUT...
...IF YOU SCREAM REAL HARD AND BLEED A LOT, MAYDE I'LL SPARE YOUR LIPS.
LET THE GAMES BEGIN!!


NEXT?

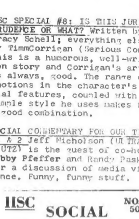
SMALL PRESS REPORT!

Welcome to the second instalment of the SMALL PRESS REPORT. We've received a lot of positive feedback on the column from both 'small-pressers' and 'main-streamers', so you can bet SPR will be a continuing feature in FANTASTIC FANZINE. Before I begin reviewing individual books, etc., I just wanted to mention the star of the Tenth Annual Chicago Comicon: Matt Feazel, creator of CYNICALMAN. I swear, everyone I passed, walking through the hotel, had a handful of mini's. Matt's being the most predominant. He sold, according to Randy Paske, $87.00 worth of mini's. His success doesn't stop there, either. Take a good look at the cover of the AMAZING HEROES PREVIEW SPECIAL that just came out...there on the right, the yellow cover above the robots head...TA-DA! CYNICALMAN! Although he was reported to have been there, this reporter managed to miss him entirely for three days. Matt, if you're reading this, expect a letter in the near future.

In the meantime, let's take a look at Randy Paske and cronies, who publish HIGH SCHOOL COMICS. Boy, do they publish! These guys have a ton of material out there and more in the works. In fact, FF Art Director Ralph Griffith and I got a sneak preview at a then incomplete, soon to be released jam session' mini-comic about events at the Chicago Con. In their latest 'catalog', they have listed well over fifty individual mini's! Here's just a smattering of their pubs:

HSC SPECIAL #8: IS THIS JURISPRUDENCE OR WHAT? Written by T Tracy Schell; everything else by TimmCorrigan (Serious Comics). This is a humorous, well-written story and Corrigan's art is, as always, good. The range of emotions in the character's facial features, coupled with the slinky style he uses makes for a good combination.

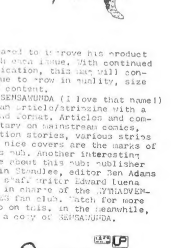
SOCIAL COMMENTARY FOR OUR TIMES #1 A 2 Jeff Nicholson (IN THA KUTZ!) is the guest of co-hosts Bobby Pfeffer and Randy Paske for a discussion of media violence. Funny, funny stuff.



HSC SPECIAL #12: SCREAM LIKE A BABY. This David Nordo son-- from the SCARY MOMSTERS albu., illustrated by Cary Baker, and inked by Jeff Gaither, is a frightening future vision and is worth a peek.

As you can see, they don't stick to any particular genre. I suggest you write for their catalog and try a few.

Mostly a news and review 'zine, MICHIGAN FANDOM TIMES has just added strips to its format. Allen Freeman's art rounds out Editor Olas Manns' REVIEWS, SMALL PRINT RUNS (a column dealing with small press comics), IM A NUTSHELL (an editorial feature) and a special KING KON '85 section. Manns has



CONTINUED ON PAGE 15...

the Alien Critic

This is the first of a two-part interview with local convention organizer, Micheal Lester. We have been listening to him relate the history of comic book conventions in the Detroit area. We enter that conversation at the point where Gary Sibley takes over the organization of the Nostalgicon.

Lester: Gary Sibley got Mike and Tony Brown's show. One time we were supposed to meet over at Classic (Movie and Comic Center) to talk about things. I remember distinctly saying to him, "Gary, I hope we're friends at the end of six months, but I have the feeling we'll be enemies." I think the reason--this is just my idea, mind you--there was such a...dislike between Gary and me was for a couple of reasons. First off, I think Mike and Tony gave him the show for the simple fact that they knew I was working hard on the show. They couldn't do it. Tony had his own shop. I think Mike was working at Archives at the time. They couldn't go around passing out flyers. They couldn't do a lot of work on the show, so they thought, Hey, we'll give it to Gary. So, then, Gary Sibley started running it and they were disappointed. Gary was not running it any better than they were. I mean, he went around to some of the shops, but he didn't even go around to the other side of town to put out flyers, which I had always done. I had a hard time getting on the side of town that had Archives and all those shops, because I didn't have a show over there. Why should they bother being nice to me? Why should we send all out customers down there?

I had opened up Gary a couple of times and I found out that Mike and Tony had told him I had said things I had never said. I assume they had said those things possibly to get some kind of confrontation between Gary and me to make me work harder on his show. That's my idea behind it, because out of the blue I'm told I said things I don't think I ever said and I can't understand why I would say them.

FF: What kind of things?

Lester: I was told I said Gary was an asshole. I was also told I said that I was going to wipe Gary Sibley off the face of the Earth, I was going to have his show off the face of the Earth. I said, Gary, who told you these things? He said, Tony Brown told me. I said Gary, I never said those things to him, believe me.

So, anyway, Gary and I were on bad terms from that point on.

Now comes the big confrontation. I'm setting up at Gary Sibley's show and my next show is the same day as the King Kon. Now, first off, Gary Reed asked me two months before what's the date of my show. I said, "I can't change it." He said, "Well, I can't change the date of my show." I had never heard of the guy before, never heard of his show. I had no idea what kind of a show it was going to be, that it was going to be so *big*! If I had, I probably would have cancelled the show that day before I even went out the flyers! I never heard of the guy. Nobody ever told me about the guy's existance. The guy came out of nowhere!

Anyway, I came up to Gary Sibley's show, which was before our shows by a couple of weeks. At the show, Gary Sibley was doing an auction of sorts and he auctioned off tables for Gary Reed. I asked Gary (Sibley) if he would put out some of my tables. He said no, he had too much merchandise for it (the auction). I probably pressed too hard, but I was really insulted, because we had--it wasn't a formal agreement--we had an agreement that, hey, you advertise for my show, I'll advertise for your show. We'll be cool. And then Gary Reed came in there and, I have a feeling, Gary Sibley saw it as a good way to get a cheap shot at Micheal Lester. That's the way I looked at it, because we had so many bad tidbangs before that. That was kind of the thing that broke the camel's back.

So, I went up to Gary Sibley and I said, "Gary, I don't ever want to see you at my show again. The stuff you've done here today is total bullshit." I could not believe what was happening, so I packed up my books, I said, "Mike, Tony you can come to the show, but I don't want to see another flyer for that asshole's show."

Before this had happened, there was many times I had put my flyers out at their show and there wasn't enough people there to...to...cause all my flyers to mysteriously disappear consistently. I got a little bit smarter. I ended up putting littler stacks and going back there five or six times. But, my flyers would be turned over, they'd be missing, they'd be covered over, thrown in the garbage. It was really weird.

After this confrontation, we both had our shows and, thank God, both of 'em came through okay. Actually, I hear tell that Gary (Reed)'s came out really well, which I am pleased for him. After that, *things* started happening. My flyers were mysteriously disappearing. I enquired to the people, why are my flyers disappearing? And they couldn't understand it, but, then, I said to them, was a short, like that on here, with a deep voice, a little bit on the pudgey side. Yeah, yeah, I think there was a guy in here like that. So, I have my ideas how they were *mysteriously* disappeared.

Me (Gary Sibley and Michael Lester) had bad feelings. I would not give him my schedule of shows, because I was in fear of putting his shows a week before mine every time. I couldn't trust him on it. So, I tried to get Gary to sit down with me at one point in time, I phoned him about five or six times, and told him, Gary, is it possible we can sit down and talk over our schedules and all that stuff? He said no. He said I don't want you at my show. I don't want you ever to set up at my show. I said I don't want to set up at your show, but I like going to a show where I don't have to do any work. I'd like to walk into a show, buy books and leave. I won't even have a flyer. I won't even *mention* my show. But, he said that's it! I don't want you at my show! Well, I didn't like that, so...

FF: You came to the show.

Lester: I came to the show. He said, Mike, you're a bloody fool. And he phoned up the police and the police ejected me, which, I am told, is totally illegal, by the way. If you don't have a history of me causing trouble or...well, anyways, I think the police just didn't want a hassle. It wasn't that big of a deal.

FF: We almost had pictures of that incident!

Lester: Thank God, you didn't. (laughter) So, I picked up my stuff and went home and I was very disgruntled. I felt bad for a little while, but, then again, I started getting mad. I started getting really pissed off, because, at that show, Gary had also told me that I had burned Mike and Tony Brown from ever coming to my show again. I had never said that. It would be stupid of me to alienate...They have have shops. There's no problem with it. If they want to come to the show, they can come to the show.

Anyway, after this incident happened, I said this is bullshit. I had always wanted to go to Nine and Middlebelt. I had even mentioned it four or five times to Gary that he should move his show from Nine and Telegraph to Nine and Middlebelt. He never listened to me, so I said the hell with this and I moved my show there. I moved *another* show there. I serviced the people better. It was a better show. Every time I went into that hall, I could picture exactly what it would look like and it would look beautiful! There was room to show movies.

Now, we get to the situation where Gary said forget it! I don't want to run shows anymore! I don't blame him, because he was in a sorry way with that show. He was on the ropes. So, this is what I heard from Rock (Big Comic Stop), he said anybody want a show? Steve Sundahl just happened to be there. He says, I'll take it. I had heard a lot of rumours that Steve Sundahl was going to run me out of business. I got a little bit leery. Pete Follo was interested in it. I'm told Pete Follo wanted it bad and somehow Pete Follo didn't get it.

Back phones up and says, Mike, Mike, come over to the shop. I want to talk

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15.

FANTASTIC FANZINE LOOKS AT:

JIM STERANKO

Steranko. The man who started as a trapeze artist and who is now the publisher of the magazine PREVUE. He started his career in the comic business in 1963 when he met up with Joe Simon to create a new line of books for Harvey Publications. There are conflicting sources as to what he actually did for Harvey. It is known for certain that he did work on the title, SPYMAN, for two issues. It isn't known, however, if he did the artwork (as stated in the OVERSTREET PRICE GUIDE), or the script (as mentioned in the appendix of the CHANDLER VISUAL NOVEL). His big break didn't happen until 1966.

Stan Lee hired Steranko to do the Nick Fury strip in STRANGE TALES, starting with issue 151 (over Jack Kirby's breakdowns). At first, it was very primitive. After Kirby left the strip, however, Steranko showed his real talent. His innovative style took the comic world by storm. His use of psychedelic colors, photo montages, line resolutions, and strobe effects made NICK FURY one of the best books of the 1960's.

He soon left STRANGE TALES and Nick Fury's own book, because of disputes about deadlines. He then did the now-classic CAPTAIN AMERICA #110, 111 & 113 and THE X-MEN #49-51, the latter was as a favor to Sol Brodsky. After these, Steranko left comic books to pursue a career in publishing.

Since he left comics, Steranko has done a few covers, but almost all of his time is spent publishing and editing his magazine. It seems that he has become so busy that he has started looking for an assistant to help publish PREVUE. Let's hope that "The Busy One" always has time to give us fans what we are looking for.

Following is a Jim Steranko Checklist. If anyone has any further information concerning Steranko and his art, please write to Doug Brown c/o FANTASTIC FANZINE.

"Name's Barney McAllister. I'm a reporter. I cover remarkable phenomena. My friend's name is Dick Carstairs. He's also the MASKED MAN. He fights crime."

This caution opens every story about the star of this month's HEROES UNKNOWN: THE MASKED MAN.

Dick Carstairs is an average guy, possessing no super powers. And his costume is not colored brightly nor inscribed with an illustrious emblem, but is a simple buttondown shirt, dress slacks, and a loosley drawn tie. But he does wear a mask.

Dick spent his high school reading comic books. The fantasties and ideals that they represented carried on into Dick's adult life. Eventually he became a detective. One day, he found himself in a situation that needed a comic book hero. Dick put on a mask and entered the scene as the Masked Man.

Because the Masked Man is very mortal, very human, the stories are heavily based on human nature. To pull this off successfully, B.C. Boyer (creator of the Masked Man) tells the story from Barney McAllister's point of view. Barney is Dick's longtime friend who makes his living as a journalist. It is through his eyes that we witness the Masked Man's adventures with the human experience.

An example of one of B.C. Boyer's better tales was found in EGIPSE MORNING #3. Dan Drekston, a reporter who

THE UNKNOWN HEROES?

By: Mike Kitchen

covers remarkable phenomenon (only more successfully than Barney, having won 3 Pulitzer Prizes) entered the scene in order to get a Masked Man exclusive. Barney and the Masked Man were not enthused by Drekston's tagging along, but if they wanted to keep Dick's identity a secret, they had to oblige the newcomer.

On this their first case with Drekston, they chased Giusenpe, the leader of a band of gypsies that is wanted by the police, to the outskirts of town. When they pulled over, Giusenpe went after Dick for chasing him. All he wanted was to find a doctor for his wife who was in labor. Too late to get her to the hospital, Barney had to make a delivery in Giusenpe's truck alone. Dick, Drekston, and Giusenpe all declined to help. Giusenpe, however, threatened to do Barney some harm if he delivers anything but a son. Barney goes to work as Dick and Giusenpe square off, with Drekston shooting photos of the battle.

When the baby finally comes, both Dick and Giusenpe are flat on their backs exhausted from their fight. As needed cable, the baby is a girl. When Barney delivers the news to the gypsy leader, his brow rose and his voice roared, but then he smiled in awe of his newly born daughter.

Human relationships and human conflict is what the Masked Man is all about.

"Name's Jim Kitchen. I'm a columnist. I cover HEROES UNKNOWN. This month's star is Dick Carstairs. He's a detective. He's also the MASKED MAN. He fights crime. Introduce yourself to him."

THE STERANKO CHECKLIST

CAPTAIN AMERICA #104, page 11: inked all Fury poses
" " " #110- written, drawn and cover
" " " #111- " "
" " " #113- " "

DAREDEVIL #84- inked cover

DOC SAVAGE (Marvel) #2- cover
"" " #3- cover

FANTASTIC FOUR #130- cover
" " #131- "
" " #132- "

THE FLY #1- cover
" " #2- "
" " #3- "

HULK SPECIAL #1- cover

NICK FURY #1- written, drawn and cover
" " #2- " " "
" " #3- " "
" " #4- cover
" " #5- written, drawn and cover
" " #6- cover
" " #7- cover

OUR LOVE STORY #5- written, drawn and inked

SAVAGE TALES #3- written, drawn and inked

SPYMAN #1- ?
" " #2- ?

STRANGE TALES #151- drawn and inked, cover inked
" " #152- drawn and inked
" " #153- drawn, inked and cover
" " #154- drawn and inked
" " #155- written, drawn and inked, cover
" " #156- written, drawn and inked
" " #157- written, drawn and inked, cover
" " #158- written, drawn and inked
" " #159- written, drawn and inked, cover
" " #160- written, drawn and inked
" " #161- written, drawn and inked, cover
" " #162- written and drawn
" " #163- written, drawn and cover
" " #164- written and drawn
" " #165- written, drawn and cover
" " #166- written and drawn
" " #167- written, drawn and cover
" " #168- written and drawn

SUPERMAN #400- written, drawn and inked

TOWER OF SHADOWS #1- written, drawn and inked

THE YEAR IS 2703. THE PLACE IS THARSIS, A MARTIAN CITY.
THARSIS IS THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL HEART OF MARS. FAR-REACHING EVENTS OFTEN OCCUR HERE.
THIS ISN'T ONE OF THEM.
YOU WANT ME TO WHAT!?
TYGYR VANCE IN:
PET PEEVE
BY: SUSAN VAN CAMP
FROM A CONCEPT BY: SUSAN VAN CAMP AND CINDY NELSON
COPYRIGHT 1993 S.VAN CAMP C.NELSON
DOME
VEIW
DOME
VIEW
I'M A BODYGUARD, MONEK! A BODYGUARD!
I'M NOT A MENIAL SERVANT, A HOT TUB TOY, OR A HAWG WALKER!
EXERCISING DOMESTICATED PORK ROAST ISN'T MY JOB.
ONLY THE DUTIES IN MY CONTRACT ARE MANDATORY, MONEK.
THERE IT IS, HA!
PARAGRAPH TWO, LINE ONE-TEN.
IT'S THE ONLY EXTRA DUTY YOU MISSED.
DOME
JUST WALK HIM AROUND THE FRAME, PEAT. I DON'T WANT HIM TIRED.

FUNKOR KUNK
UH, OH. A QUAT.
STEADY, HAWG. ONE QUAT ISN'T WORTH A VISIT TO THE BUTCHER.
OINK
QUAA
PORK CHOPS
RUMP ROAST! BAKED HAM! SAUSAGE!!
!
WHY DIDN'T I... GO?
PURARRRRR

MONEY, YOU'RE A DEAD MAN.
BAD CHARLY'S
BATT! DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING?
#@?
NO, PAUL.
CRASH!
BAD CHARLY'S
YAHHH! THE BOUNTY HUNTER HAS FOUND ME!
I'LL GET HER, PAUL!
GRUNT! WHEET!
BAD CHARLY'S
FILTHY ROOF RATS!
?
STOP HER! SHE'S GOT MY BEER!
FAZAK!!
GODS, I'M STARTING TO LIKE THIS HAWG.
#%?!
GOOD. THEY'RE NOT FOLLOWING. I GUESS I HAVE TIME FOR A DRINK.
VISIT PHOBOS
EMPTY SHOT GLASS
DRIP
WHY IS THIS BEER FLOWING UP MY NOSE?
VISIT PHOBOS
KA-
WAP!
VISIT PHOBOS
WE JUST

TIME PASSES. DARKNESS FALLS. HAWGS WALK. FINALLY ENDS.
YOU ARE LATE!
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
YAWN.
I MISSED THE CROCKFULL'S SLUMBER PARTY BECAUSE I HAD TO WAIT FOR YOU!
WELL? WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY BEFORE I FIRE YOU?
NOW, HAWGS.
GRUNT.
THUMP!
OH DEAR. WAR HAWGS ARE SO EXCITABLE.
PERHAPS WE CAN FIGURE OUT A WAY TO CALM HIM.
IT'S NOT LONG BEFORE TYGYR AND MONEK HIT UPON AN AGREEABLE PLAN.
YES, YOU HEARD RIGHT! CANCEL TYGYR'S CONTRACT AND ASSIGN HER TEN THOUSAND CREDITS SEVERANCE PAY!
SNORT!
AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, PUT A FLUSH ON THE SIDE OF BEEF I ORDERED!
BOTH

...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9.

to you. Rock tells me, Mike, Karen and I are taking over the show. What!? ...Well, he has those days booked, and he can't get out of it. I said, well, if that's the trouble, I'll pay *off* the dates. See, I know what it costs to run a show, I know the conditions. No time are you ever so strapped in to a date that you can't get out of it. There are clauses built into it. Nobody's going to sign a contract stating that you have to do it. You have a thirty to sixty day leeway to break out of a contract. I refuse to believe that they stuck into it. Second, I was told they were only going to do three shows. I said fine! By the end of the conversation it turned out to be seven. Third off, they wanted my show dates, I said hey, guys, let's sit down, we'll talk about the dates over a cup of coffee. My wife was supposed to come out. We were all supposed to go.... It never occurred. I got a phone call the next day saying these are our dates, love 'em or leave 'em. I said weren't we supposed to go out? They couldn't wait. I said how long would it take them to wait one day? Couldn't do it. These were the dates. Just so happens after the first one next two run the same day as mine, which pissed me off immensely. I said I can't change those dates, can you? They said no. But you booked 'em the day before. Why can't you change the dates?.They said we can't. Basically, I went in there and said I will not advertise your show if your next shows after that are on the same dates as mine. That would be stupid of me. It's like giving you all my customers to take away from me for future shows.

These are the facts according to Michael Lester. In my rounds of various shows and conventions, I have heard several different versions of this story. There are still a half dozen or so people on our 'hit list' for interviews, including Gary Sibley.

A related aside: Pete Follo of Yesteryears Comics in the Flint area has taken over the convention run by the Book Bin and R's Comic Stop. Pete Priester said that the problems, hassles and animosity created from the show were simply too big of a headache to make it worthwhile. She also said that she feels there is a great deal of 'anti-Karen' sentiment among many local retailers, and she is bitter that all the time and effort she put into both their shows and the American Heroes Convention has resulted in her being ostracized by many of her former associates.

Although THE CIRCUIT is not a means to 'dig up dirt', it seems there are quite a few, let us say, not quite kosher goings on by various retailers and convention promotors. Check back in 45 days. We'll see how the situation is then.

...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8.

MOBILE DESTRUCT from APC Publishing is a fun book, no doubt. The art is a little rough in spots, but the overall stories are original (I'll say!) and extremely readable. My favorites (so far) are GUIDO THE MOSQUITO and THAT'S THUG from issue #4, and A HAUNTING TIME IN THE WOODS from #3. This is another sub with well done covers. I see this one being around for a while.

I've saved this one for last. Kevin Collier's FAN SCENE has the most complete news and information about the world of small press you will find. Kevin must be the most hardworking guy in the whole sub-industry. His articles are well thought out and equally well written. And not just in his own mag, either. He has written articles for many fanzines. This shows his spirit of cooperation rather than competition. The man is a true fan of independent publishing and this shows in the quality of his mag. A MUST!

Where to write for more info....

FT PUBLICATIONS
(FAN SCENE)
18129 Munica, MI 49448

Where to write for more info....

FT PUBLICATIONS
(FAN SCENE)
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Munica, MI 49448

UPDATE PRODUCTIONS
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Sutter, CA 95982

APC PUBLISHING
(MOBILE DESTRUCT)
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3304 Feltz Ave.
or
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Stevens Point, WI 54481

HIGH SCHOOL COMICS
P.O. Box 912
Gilbert, MN 55741

GREAT LAKES COMICS CO.
(MICHIGAN FANDOM TIMES)
2149 McGregor Ave.
Ypsilanti, MI 48198

DETROIT AREA CONVENTION HOTLINE

COMIC BOOK AND BASEBALL CARDS

557 - 3235 Michael Lester 16232 Carriage Lamp Court Apartment 102 Southfield, MI 48075

Tear off the Attached Card for Your Wallet or Purse

Hi dere, fans! Snoop here, just back in from Chicago, where I wuz busy checkin' out da big Chicago Comicon's tenth annavoisary.

Da Snoop rolled in on Thoisday to check out da area. Some a' my rats in de ol' network wuz supposed ta appear da next day. So, I 'snooped' in on da local restaurants. Da Snoop ended up at dis here Japanese joint called Kim-Ho...er, Ki-Yano... uh, Kim-Gung...or somethin' like dat. Anyways, dey bring out dese little, hot towels fer youse ta wipe yer paws on, ya know. Bein' da careful kinda guy da Snoop is, I declined. No, they're not gonna pull any of those Japanese tricks on me! As fer da food, what can I say but Great Veggies!

After a good night's sleep (da *only* night I did much sleepin'!), ta da Con I wuz off. Da price wuz right: only five bills a day admittance. Dealer tables were too numerous ta count. Lotsa nice Golden Age, too. And prost Marvel, DC, Comico, and Kitchen Sink all had tables. Writers, editors, artists, and inkers were available for questions and critiques on submissions. De show ended at 7:00 Friday ev'nin', but Marvel and Capital City (who, by da way, distribute FANTASTIC FANZINE) both had fabulous parties, at which, of course, da Snoop here wuz doin' t'ing! It's all over at 4:00 AM, wit da Snoop an' pals closin' da Quest Lounge inside da Ramada.

Due ta such a busy night an' a slight headache, da Sonny was a tad late fer da show, next morning. After sitting in on a few seminars, I met wit' da publishers of High School Comics (check out da SMALL PRESS REPORT), nice guys doin' some great stuff, and they're a lot of what fandom is all about.

Mosta the night wuz spent talkin' ta dealers about how dere shops wur makin' it. Most of 'em complained about slumpin' back issue sales and da industry's lack of good business sense, notin' dat many shops are run by fans an' not business people. It gives da industry as a whole a sorta amateurish look.

Next t'ing ya know, it's Sunday, da last day a' da show. So da Snoop decides ta make his big comic purchases: THE BARBARIAN KILLER FUNNIES an' THE THREE STOOGES IN 3-D. I sat in on a few panels, said 'bye ta a few new friends, jumped in my little red Corvette, an' cruised back ta da homefront. Da Snoop is gonna make da Chicago Con an annual t'ing an' suggests ya do dose da same.

A week before da Chicago show, I snuck into da American Heroes con in Taylor, Mich. Dis show had a great line-up of both comic an' sports guests. Unfortunately, last minute cancellations by all da sports people hurt da overall look. Also, DC pulled their guests in a supposed boycott over da appearance of Adam West, TV's Batman. For more info on dis story, read next issue's CIRCUIT. Dis show had da greatest selection a' Golden Age ever shown in da Detroit area. De guest line-up (despite da ones dat didn't show) was real good. Brent Anderson, Lela Dowling, Fred Hembeck, Jeff Dee, Eastman an' Laird, jus' ta name a few. Also present wuz ol' K-2 Comics who publish VOLT, A $1.50, color cover, black an' white book, ya might want ta give it a try.

Da Snoop isn't some elite people. I'm sure) wuz disappointed at a rather low fan turn out fer da show, which is one a' da largest in our area. Hopefully, American Heroes will make a return appearance next year.

Well, see ya at da next con. Oh, yeah yeah, get ready fer da King Kon comin' in September.

REVIEWS

I'll start with the top five books that have come out since last issue, and then get on with other matters of interest...

1) CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS #7- Not because Supergirl died, but because of the way Marv Wolfman tied everything together and the overall way he handled her death. Great stuff!

2) NEXUS #7- The dreams are gone and Nexus doesn't give a damn. Dave, Sundra, Juddah, and all of Ylum are affected by his lethargy. Baron and Rude produce another gem in the mountain of comics.

3) SUPERMAN ANNUAL #11- Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons (two English blokes) spin a fantastic story featuring America's greatest heroes. Batman, Robin, and Wonder Woman guest star in the story entitled "For the Man Who Has Everything."

4) THE MASKED MAN #3- B.C. Boyer's characters are thrown into another fine, human story. See the HEROES UNKNOWN column for more information on this fantastic title.

5) INFINITY, INC. #17 & 18- Finally, something exciting is happening with this series as Roy Thomas introduces Helix. Great art by Todd McFarlane, Tony DeZuniga, and Pablo Marcos.

In my second HEROES UNKNOWN column (issue #4 of FF, for those of you who missed it), I suggested that you give JONAH HEX a try. Well, now that he has been sent to the future, as of HEX #1, I'd like to change that statement. I recommend back issues of JONAH HEX and let HEX sell on the shelves. Though the art is good, the idea of sending our favorite gunslinger into the future was uncalled for. I feel that, if Jonah's sales were that poor, they should have just killed him off either in CRISIS, or conclude the series with a reprint of the JONAH HEX SPECTACULAR that published the story of his death. Then, they could have replaced it with a new title, featuring a new "Mad Hex" character. Oh well, what's done is done. As far as this fan is concerned, Jonah Hex is dead.

Never judge a comic book by the way it looks on the inside. I learned this lesson after reading CROSSFIRE #11. Mark Evanier wrote this story in the form of a movie script with pictures, which turned me off at first. But after reading the story, my faith was renewed in Mark's talent. My only complaint about this title is that the covers have not been all that eye-catching. Dan Spiegle is a talented artist and could produce some fantastic covers for this series.

There are three reasons why STIG'S INFERNO is not a popular book; it's in black and white, it costs $1.75, and it doesn't say Marvel or DC on the cover. However, it is one of the funniest books out right now. Ty T Templeton has taken Dante's INFERNO into the realm of silliness. Sorry, fans, but I cannot name three Marvel comics that you should be buying instead of this one.

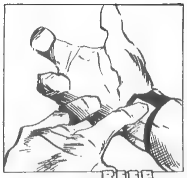
Victory Productions has just come out with there first title, SHURIKEN. Not one for ninja books, I picked it up anyway to give it a try. Black and white for $1.50 is quite a risk, but well worth it this time. The story shows good potential and the characters are strong. The art's not bad, either. If you happen to find yourself with an extra $1.50 and SHURIKEN is sitting on the shelf before you, consider taking the risk.

Other titles I strongly recommend are: AMBUSH BUG #3
BADGER #7
NIGHTMARE #1 & 2
ZOT! #9
SWORDS OF THE SWASHBUCKLERS #2
NEW TEEN TITANS #12
NIGHTVEIL #2
MAGE #7

AS THE GREAT SPIRAL GALAXY FALLS INTO DECAY THE PIRATE EMPIRE, LED BY CAPTAIN ALBINO BLYDE, PLUNDERS COUNTLESS WORLDS. BUT ONE ORGANIZATION STANDS FIRM IN OPPOSITION... AN OUT-BRANCH OF THE CELESTIAL FEDERATION KNOWN AS...

THE STAR CORPS
LAST ISSUE: CAPTAIN QUANTO BARELY SURVIVED AN ATTACK BY THREE PIRATE CRUISERS. NOW CAPTAIN BRIER, THE ONLY ONE TO RETURN FROM THE SLAUGHTER, REPORTS TO CAPTAIN ALBINO BLYDE
ART/PLOT GUY DAVIS
INKS TIM DZON
LETTERS STU KERR
... C-CAPTAIN ODEPLUS' SHIP WAS DESTROYED WITH ONE SHOT! THE PARADOX WAS TOO HEAVILY ARMED! I... I HAD TO FLEE IN ORDER TO INSURE THE RETURN OF THE LOOT WE CARRIED! STRYKER STAYED TO COVER MY EXIT... I... I HAD NO CHOICE ....
PIRATES WRATH

GROUP LEADER STRYKER WAS A FOOL TO THINK HE COULD TAKE OVER THE PARADOX, BUT HIS EFFORTS WERE NONE THE LESS NOBLE...
I DETEST COWARDICE!



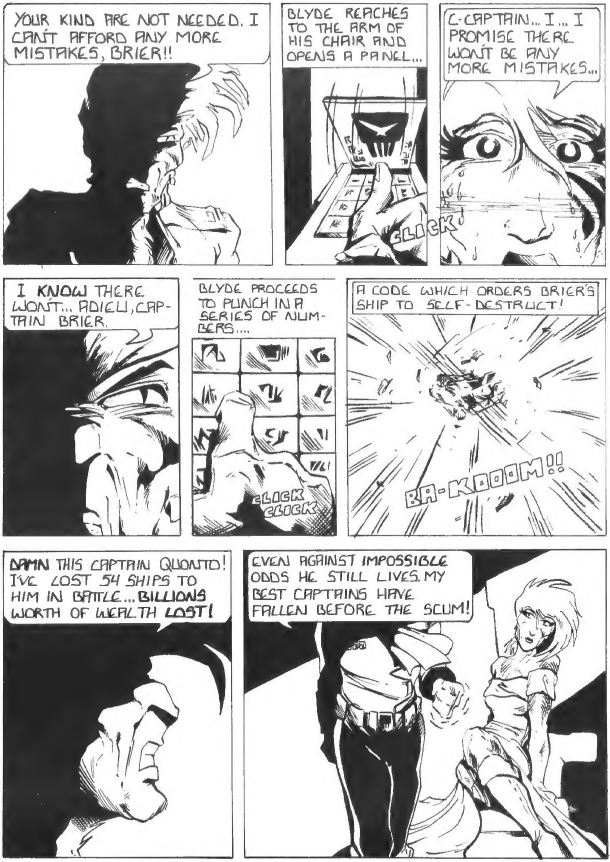
BEEP
BUT NO ONE WINS ALL OF THE TIME AND I FEEL QUONTO'S LUCK WILL SOON RUN OUT.

YOU CALLED FOR ME, MON COPTAIN?

YES, MR. POLLUX, OPPOSITION FROM THE STAR CORPS IS GETTING OUT OF CONTROL...
IT'S TIME I TOOK MATTERS INTO MY OWN HANDS AND DEALT WITH THIS "CAPTAIN QUONTO" PERSONALLY.

READY MY SHIP, "LOCKJAW", WITH A THREE SHIP ESCORT.
AYE SIR, HUR REFITTING IS COMPLETED...

THEN QUONTO WILL DIE, AND THE STAR CORPS WILL FALL BEFORE ME!!


YOUR KIND ARE NOT NEEDED. I CAN'T AFFORD ANY MORE MISTAKES, BRIER!!
BLYDE REACHES TO THE ARM OF HIS CHAIR AND OPENS A PANEL...
CLICK
C-CAPTAIN... I... I PROMISE THERE WON'T BE ANY MORE MISTAKES...
I KNOW THERE WON'T... ADIEU, CAPTAIN BRIER.
BLYDE PROCEEDS TO PUNCH IN A SERIES OF NUMBERS....
CLICK CLICK
A CODE WHICH ORDERS BRIER'S SHIP TO SELF-DESTRUCT!
BA-KAOOOM!!
DAMN THIS CAPTAIN QUONTO! I'VE LOST 54 SHIPS TO HIM IN BATTLE... BILLIONS WORTH OF WEALTH LOST!
EVEN AGAINST IMPOSSIBLE ODDS HE STILL LIVES. MY BEST CAPTAINS HAVE FALLEN BEFORE THE SCUM!

...MEANWHILE, LIGHT YEARS AWAY...
CAPTAINS LOG: AFTER MINOR REPAIRS AT STARBASE 12, THE USS PARADOX IS IN WARP TRANSIT TO THE NORTHERN SHIPPING LANES. TO PASS THE TIME I HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED BY STAR CORPS COMMAND TO TRAIN THE CREW IN THE TECHNIQUES OF SWORDFIGHTING... I HAVE A FEELING THIS MAY BE A BAD IDEA...
ALRIGHT YOU GUYS, YOU'VE ALL BEEN ISSUED REGULATION STAR CORPS EPEES, THE PIRATES LOVE TO USE SWORD PLAY WHEN POSSIBLE AND ALOT OF THE TIME YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO BRING YOUR PISTOLS TO BEAR...
NOW SPLIT UP AND PRACTICE ONE ON ONE...
AND MIND OUT, LET'S HAVE NO BLOOD SHED...
RIGHT ERIKO, YOU FIGHT ME... C'MON DO YOUR BEST.
WELL... OK CAPTAIN...
CAPTAINS LOG: THIS WAS A BAD IDEA...
?SIGH!
OUCH! OUCH! OUCH!
I THINK IT WOULD HELP IF YOU KEPT YOUR EYES OPEN... HERE WATCH ME...
PLOOVO! C'MERE
YEAH, QUOVITO?
WELL, ITS EASY FOR HIM, HE'S PROGRAMMED FOR...
JUST WATCH AND LEARN!
EN GARDE, YE PIRATE SWINE!
TING TING
HAR! HAR!
...FUNNY...
AH-HA!
CLANK!
EEEERRRRRR...

WHOAH!!
HA!!
SMACK
THERE, SEE? JUST KEEP TOYING WITH 'EM UNTIL YOU CATCH THEM OFF GUARD... HA... HA...
RIGHT EVERYONE, WE'LL CONTINUE PRACTICE TOMORROW. RETURN YOUR SWORDS TO THE RACK AND REPORT BACK TO YOUR STATIONS.
HEY CAP, HOW'D YOU GET SO GOOD?
WELL... I HAD A GOOD TEACHER... I'LL BE IN MY CABIN IF YOU NEED ME. YOU HAVE COMMAND.
BYE...
"...AYE... CAPTAIN..."
CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS.
GAIGE
YES... A VERY GOOD TEACHER INDEED.
NEXT ISSUE
LOCKWAR-FARE

Dear Fantastic Folks,

Thanks for issue #8 of FF, as well as the other issues you've sent.

TELONIOUS KATT was a very high quality story. Very unique. I liked the stylized art of the STAR CORPS. Well paced writing, too.

I was surprised to see your SMALL PRESS REPORT out already. Thanks for reviewing ULTRA KLUTZ and for promoting the sub-industry altogether.

As to be honest, the ad rates are a little out of my ball park. I've seen virtually no ads in FF, so you might get more revenue by cutting your rates by half or more and taking in more ads. Small pressers are used to paying about $10.00 for a full page. Nothin' personal. "Just the facts, ma'am"--er, I mean, sir!

Also, is 500 your print run, or your paid circulation? If it's press run, then the number of readers advertisers are paying for would be a lot less after promos, giveaways, freebies, etc. With lower ad rates and the appeal of your Capital City distribution, I can think of about twenty pressers that would fill FF with ads.

Sorry to sound like Mr. Know-It-All. Maybe I don't know what I'm talking about. FANTASTIC FANZINE is a great publication and I hope it continues to grow. Thanks again, on the

Jeff Nicholson

Jeff,

We have dropped our ad rates, as you have (if you read Editor's Page. Five hundred lpdus a few dozen extras) is our print run, with us selling about 450 of those.

Dear Editor,

Though FF is obviously a Michigan based zine and therefore of most interest to people in that area, there was still enough to make it worthwhile to 'outsiders' like myself. Though the emphasis was on the strips, there was still substantial sections of text, making it a rather nice balance overall. The packaging itself was very slick for a fanzine, and the only complaints I have on this score are with respect to the text pieces. Some of the typed words printed too lightly to read (on my copy, at least) and the borders were often not lined up properly with either the text or the page itself. Also, the handwritten page numbers and suchlike looked out of place.

All of the strips had something to recommend them, but I enjoyed the Aniverse feature most of all. It was lighthearted and humorous, with some inventive moments in both the scripting and the pictures. The artstyle fitted the subject matter very well. The STAR CORPS installment was a pretty standard space-opera-ish outing, but I did like the numerous examples of wierd (and rather endearing) aliens. Something about FELONIOUS KATT didn't click with me. Maybe it was this sight of a huge woman cat galoomphing around an otherwise normal and tough (eg. child beating) world. However, such a short look at that atmosphere is not enough for me to know if I could come to accept it eventually. I mean, if I can 'believe' a tiny sort-of-aardvark in a human world, then there's hope for me yet!)

I was interested in The Circuit's approach to the convention scene. This exploration of how conventions can hurt the retail outlets is intriguing and should be carried on. (However, when a business person says that that the fact that he is losing money is bad for the world in general, you have to be a little bit skeptical.) I was also pleased to see the piece on small press comics. It is indeed an area that has its own peculiar (and I do mean 'peculiar'!) charme, and is worth more consideration from the average fan.

Like Mike Kitchen, I was upset that ATARI FORCE was cancelled and sorry that it never received more support from fandom. However, I'm not so indignant as he appears to be. First of all, he says that AF was cancelled despite high sales, and cites the AMAZING HEROES top 300 as proof of this. However, this is ignoring the performance of AF on the newsstands (i.e. nondirect market). Titles often perform very differently in the two markets. For instance, SUPERMAN is very weak in the direct market, but is one of DC's top-selling titles overall, because it does very well on the newsstands. Secondly, there could be other reasons for the cancellation. It might be, as was claimed in the last issue, that it was planned as a short series and may be returning in the future. Or, it may have to do with the fact that Warner, DC's parent, had sold off the Atari division and thus wanted to get rid of all connections with it. Or, it might be a combination of all these reasons.

Yours truly,
"T.M. Maple"

Dear "T.M.",

While we are striving for a certain amount of national attention, we feel the topics in The Circuit are, indeed, relevant. We do plan to cover many different aspects and viewpoints of comic book conventions. Check out this issue's installment from the convention promotor's P.O.V. Aside from The Circuit, we hope to cover a broader view in the rest of the mag, so as to be able to offer something of interest to almost everyone. --Stu
P.S. "Galoomphing!!"

Dear Stuart,

Nice to hear from you. Tomorrow IAN SCENE #4 comes out of the printers, but it will take four days to get it all processed for mailing. The big work comes with that. As you know, I don't sell to distributors. FS is strictly a mail order/subscription basis fanzine. Lotsa work.

Sure, I'll write a column for FF. I always have time for this, and thanks for the flattering remarks. The only hard thing about writing all of these columns is not the time involved, Stu. It's trying to find an interesting and different subject about small press comics to talk on each time. Yes, my columns do appear in many zines. More often daily. I guess people think of me as some kind of authority on small press. If I know so much about it, it's only because I love it so much, and have for nearly a decade now.

On your contributors, you noted none are paid. Stu, this is nearly a must for all in small press. Zines cannot sell out salaries, fans understand that. We go broke on printing alone! I do pay columnists, and I only have two: Dave Carlyon and Jeff Roberts. Comic strips are printed as donations, or the only payment (now) is exposure for the artist.

Take care,
Kevin Collier

Dear Kevin,

Looking forward to your article. Yes, if I was going to pick someone at the bottom on small press, it would have to be you. FAN Scene is a great pub and I hope to see it continue for some time to come.

Dear Mr. Stuart

Just this week I picked up your FANTASTIC FANZINE from #2 to #7. Before my eyes was a living Fanzine developing and flourishing into what it is now. I begun with the first and finished with #7. I already had #1 which I picked up last September from King Con convention. Any way, I read every little thing in it, believe me! This is the reason why I am taking the time to write you, also because I am strong in possitive reinforcement and the will to construct, endure and go forward.

I am overwhelmed and estatic to have found your Fanzine. I believe it has all the right material to make it big. Just don't get too big and forget about us. Another main reason for writting is because I am a student artist, at CMU and would like to submit some of my own art. I hope you can fit my sketch of MAYALIN, (Wonder Woman) in a colum. She is new and I would like to make her grow

I don't want to make this long: so keep up the good work, I just know it will pay off before you know it.

Oh yeah- I plead you not to split the Fanzine.

I want Jonny Gambit back.

Have you considered getting ads from local business. I just know they would cooperate, it will also help, for your support.

Sincerelly;

Jesus M. Solis
837 Green Rd. #308
Ypsilanti MI, 48197.

Dear Jesus,

I'm glad you are pleased with FF's progress so far. As for advertisin', this is an area that we need to devote some time to. As for JOHNNY GAMBIT, I hope to be able to publish the end of the series, but it is up in the air right now.